A NEW QUESTION.

Should Idiots be Allowed to Live, or be Killed to Improve the Species?

Baltimore Herald.

At a meeting of the Pennsylvania State Medical society, on Tuesday last, Dr. Leffman read a paper on the advisability, propriety or wisdom of killing idiots, natural monstrosities, or persons suffering intense misery from disease. Dr. Leffman stated that he advanced his views on the subject, not because he was irrevocably committed to them, nor wished to convert his fellow physicians to them, but because he desired to excite debate on the subject. Unfortunately, other business interfered, and the debate was not extended Nevertheless, it was shown that there was an inclination on the part of many to agree with Dr. Leffman th t within reasonable bounds it would be wise and justifiable to remove from life the classes of persons mentioned.

That this proposition should be laid down at all shows that scientific men are, year by year, becoming more bold and fearless; that it should be seriously entertained shows that the disposition to frown down upon innovations is passing away; that the bare mention of such a proposition does not excite horror and indignation shows that the masses of the people have learned that the wisest plan is to suspend judgment until such questions are fully discussed.

Viewed from an unprejudiced standpoint—that is, considering man in the abstract, without regard to the affections of blood—it must be admitted that Dr. Leffman's proposition, so far as it applies to idiots and monstrosities, is worthy of serious consideration. We do not consider that the proposition to remove persons suffering from incurable diseases ought to be entertained for an instant.

The characteristics which distinguish man from brute are language, a desire to acquire knowledge, a sense of individuality or personality, an abstract conception of the existence of a Supreme Being, and a hope or desire for a continued future existence. The absence of any of these characteristics brings men nearer the brute; the absence of all of them would transform him into a brute.

An idiot—and we use the word in its most strict sense—possesses none of these characteristics, except occasionally that of language; in a majority of cases they have only voice, the power to utter sounds, but not to form them into words. The mental qualities of man, and not his physical formation, can constitute his claim to superiority over brutes, and in that view of the matter what claim has an idiot to be considered a human being? It is impossible to believe that he was created to serve any end, and if he was he fails to do it. His life is a mere animal existence. He is more incapable of taking care of himself than the brutes, for the instinct which is given to them is denied to him, and he lacks even a degree of intelligence which is implanted in the breast of man. The idiot is not only useless to society, but he is dangerous. Having no conception of the difference between right and wrong, he is likely to commit murder, arson or any other crime. Under certain circumstances he might propagate his species. Viewed from a religous standpoint, the idiot can serve no useful end, for neither by instinct nor education does he recognize the existence of a Supreme Being and he has no hope nor desire for a future existence. Viewed from a worldly standpoint, his life is of no object, for he does not possess the intelligence necessary to make him a desirable citizen, and there is no hope that his condition will ever change. Viewed from an economic standpoint the idiot is a charge upon his friends or the community. Viewed through the spectacles of the scientists, the idiot, lacking in every thing that distinguishes man from brute, occupies space and consumes food in a world that is now not too large for the people on it who are desirable inhabitants. All the observations on idiots apply with equal force to monstrosities.

It is plain, therefore, that it is desirable to remove those unfortunates from a world in which they are so unfitted to live. Whether it should rest with any man or any set of men to decide upon their fate we will not attempt to say, but those who admit the justice of capital punishment will find it hard to urge a valid argument against the right to remove idiots and monstrosities.

What The Tariff Costs The People.

The New York Times, a republican paper, presents the matter in the following striking manner:

For instance, says the Times, a broadcloth dress suit which costs $50 in New York, costs only $22 in London.

A heavy bnsiness suit, which costs $30 in New York, costs but $13 in London.

A spring serge overcoat, which costs $20 in New York, costs but $8 50 in London.

A winter beaver overcoat, which costs $35 in New York, costs but $14 50 in London.

A silk hat, which costs, $5 in New York, costs but $3 in London.

These articles altogether cost in New York $140. In London they cost but $61. The man who buys these clothes, therefore, in New York, pays $79 more for them than he could buy them for in London.

The Courier-Journal, commenting on the above asks "what causes the difference in the two cities?" and answers the questions energetically and pointedly as follows:

Our tariff.

No one will dispute that with the tariff removed, the same goods can be purchased as cheaply in New York as in London, at least as cheaply plus the freight rates between the two cities.

The man who pays, therefore, $140 for clothes in New York, realy buys $61 worth of clothes, on which he pays $79 taxes.

And where do these taxes go?

If the goods are manufactured in this country, not one cent reach s the treasury. It is simply $79 taken by law from the man that buys $61 worth of clothes, and given to the man that makes cloth.

If the goods are manufactured abroad, $79 goes to a treasury which does not need it and which can raise all the revenue it requires on whisky, tobacco and articles of luxury.

In either case the purchaser of the clothes gets absolutely nothing for the $79 of the $140 which he spends.

If on buying the clothes he had to pay $61 to the clothier, and $79 directly to a tax collecter, how long would he stand such extortion?

In result there is not a particle of difference between that system and the present tariff system, according to which he is thus unnecessarily and exorbitantly taxed, not only on his clothing but on nearly every other necessity of life.

How long will the people of a country which claims to be free submit to this legallized robbery, which those who uphold it, and grow fat upon it, are pleased to call a protective tariff?

THE SNAKE LIAR.

Specimens of the Highest Style of the Art.

While Priscilla Martin, of Scrogg's Neck, was dusting the book case last summer, a snake brought in a mouthful of daisies and set them in a glass of water that was standing on the window-sill., It afterward made friends with the family and did various curious things about the place It returns every summer and is always welcome. It goes down the well and fastens the bucket on whenever off the rope and it hangs from a beam by the tail and holds the leather bag that the young man about the house pounds back and forward with his knuckles. Last week, when they were making a lot of ice cream for a Sunday school picnic, the snake beat the eggs with its tail and did it better and about forty times faster than it could have been done in the usual way.

While Lettia Grimsby was lying asleep in a hammock on the front porch among the honeysuckles one day last week, a snake came out of on adjoining field, crawled up into the hammock and braided her hair. When the young lady awoke she was greatly astonished to find her hair braided, but supposed it the act of her sister, as the snake had disappeared. The following day the same thing occurred again, and her sister, having seen it, aroused the young lady after the snake had gone and told her what had happened. At the present time the girls in the Grimsby family never braid their hair at all. When they want it braided they simply lie in the hammock and pretend they are asleep and the snake does the business for them.

Walter J. Blum was riding on his bicycle along the turnpike at Vernon, N. J., one day last week, when the rubber tire suddenly flew off the front wheel. Before the rider could stop the machine, a large blacksnake that was lying in the road suddenly placed its body in the groove of the wheel, which it just fitted and lay there until the bicycler reached the end of his journey.

Heard at Long Distances.

Oakland, Cal., Tribune: Sound confined by the walls of the Grand Canon of the Colorado is transmitted to remarkable distances. A train of cars crossing the bridge at the Needles is heard, on a quiet day, at Cottonwood Island, eighty-four miles away; the music of fife and drum at Fort Majove is recognized at Bull,s Head, an equal distance; the sunrise gun at the fort awakens light sleepers at El Dorado Cannon, ninety-six miles beyond,

A Bigger Fool.

Drake's Travelers' Magazine.

During the construction in Arkansaw of the Little Rock & Fort Smith railroad, the old squatters, when the line of work began, curving around great mountains and creeping along the grim and awful ledges of slate, were much concerned with regard to the enterprise, and, true to their "raisin'," were not disposed to look upon it with the progressive eye of favor. One day when the workmen began grading near the cabin of an old fellow known as Coon-skin Pete, that worthy elector of a great commonwealth came out, and approaching one of the engineers, asked:

"What on 'arth air yer doin' cap'n?"

"Building a railroad."

"Wall, I 'lowed yer was flingin' up a sweet tater ridge; Mur—that's my wife—'lowed yer was goin' ter dam up the creek for the 'commodation o' the beavers, and Dink—that's my son, the one what bit the right year offen one o' the swamp boys—he 'lowed yer wus doin' it fur fun. Now sense yer mention it, I b'lieve thar wus a passel o' fellers 'long here sometimer' go dragin' a coon chain an' takin' sight with a t'ree-leg stool 'rangements. Railroad, eh? Have yer got ernuff rails?"

"We will have enough."

"I 'lowed if yer didn't. I'd split yer a passel fur two dollars an' er half er thousan'; that's cheaper'n you ken buy 'em any whar else in this here community. I wouldn't make the offer, but Mur's folks—four strappin' boys an' er powerful gal—is a visitin' us, an' I mout as well put 'em ter work."

"You don't understand," replied the engineer, amused at the old fellow. I don't mean fence-rails but iron on which steam cars are run."

"Wall!" opening his eyes. "Yer don't mean that yer air goin' ter have steam cars here, do yer?"

"Oh, yes; we'll have them here now in a very short time."

"An' yer won't have 'em here but a short time, nuther."

"why?"

"The Simmons boys'll steal 'em, that's why."

"They couldn't steal a locomotive."

"Couldn't they; wall they just could. Feller named Jones started a saw-mill in this neighborhood some time ergo, an' one mornin' when he woke up he foun' that the thing wus dun gone. Arter a while, he foun' it way over in Pennyville holler, sawin, fur the Simmons boys, fit ter kill hisse'f. Don't talk ter me erbout the Simmons boys, stranger, fur I never seed nothin' yet whut they couldn't steal."

"We'll risk it. Say, my friend, where can we find some good water?"

"I never seed no good water."

"What do you drink?"

"Anything you've got handy," throwing out a chew of tobacco.

"Excuse me; I didn't ask you to drink. How's that spring down there? Water good enough to drink?"

"Some folks drinks it."

"How far is it to Berry's Cove?"

"Hundred miles or so."

"What, from here?"

"Oh, no, not frum here; yer did not say frum here."

"Well, how far is it from here?"

"Yer can make it as fur as yer please."

"Well, then, since you're so particular, how near is it?"

"Oh, I ain't particular, stranger. It's twenty-five yards."

"What, from here?"

"No, not frum here. Yer didn't ask how near frum—"

"Look here!"

"That's whar I'm lookin'."

"Why don't you answer a question squarely?"

"Why don't yer ax it squar?"

The engineer sat for a time drumming on the end of a log and smoking his pipe. After awhile, looking up, he asked:

"There are a number of bluffs between here and Berry's Cove, aren't they?"

"Now you'r shoutin'. Twixt here an' thar lives an ole feller named Jack Spellers. He's the bigges' bluff yer ever seed, but it's all bluff. Ef yer sit down with him he'll try ter bluff yer, but keep yer eye on the cards an' hole him down. I ain't no great snakes at poker, but he couldn't bluff me."

"I've got enough of you," said the engineer, "you may go."

"I wus here fust, stranger, an' if yer want anybody ter go, go yerse'f."

"You are the biggest fool I ever saw."

"Like ter see a bigger one, wouldn't yer?"

"Yes I'd walk five miles to see a bigger one."

"Wall, yer needn't go quite so fur; jis' go down thar ter that spring an' look in. Good-day, stranger, wish yer well, but ef the Lord don't improve in his likes towards yer, my frien', you'll far' mighty poorly when the trumpet blows."

A Greeley Reminiscence.

Ben Van Houten, Greeley's old bell-boy, is driving a milk wagon in New Jersey. He was 6 feet high when in the Tribune service, and he had eyes like goggles and a hand like the hand of providence.

Bub, said Horace to him, as he entered his sanctum one night. I want to write for an hour or two, and I don't want to be bothered. Keep all the bums out of my room.

Yes, Mr. Greeley. Ben replied in a hoarse voice, for he had a voice like a bull of Basham.

Within half an hour Ben Bruce, Dennis McLaughlin, and several others political gadflies tried to buzz their way to the old man's room, but were summarily squelched by Ben. Finally, Senator Henry Wilson, of Massachusetts, entered. He had been on a campaign tour in Indiana, and he wore the dirtiest duster and slouch hat that had been seen in New York since the departure of the Pendleton escort in 1868. The senator dropped his carpet-bag and advanced toward the open door of Greeley's sanctum, whence he was confronted by Ben.

Where are you going? blurted the watchdog.

I'm going to see Mr. Greeley? the senator replied.

Not much you hain't, roared Ben, elevating his voice so as to make himself solid with Horace. Git right o' here, or I'll help you out.

General Wilson was dumbfounded. His face, usually red, was made redder by Ben's manner.

Won't you be so kind as to take my name in to Mr. Greeley? he asked.

Ben looked hard at him and asked his name, Wilson, was the reply.

Well, said Ben, I'll go in and see if he wants to see you.

He returned in forty seconds, more aggressive than ever.

It's just as I told you, he roared. He won't see you; now, d—n you, git out o' here.

Wilson turned to Amos Cummings, night editor, who lay back in his chair, bursting with suppressed emotion.

What's the matter, General? he asked.

Senator Wilson, explained, while Ben looked on in astonishment.

There must be some mistake, the night editor remarked, and I'll take you in and introduce you to Mr. Greeley.

They entered the great editor's sanctum together. Horace sat at his high desk, with eyes close to the manuscript, scratching away like a hen on a fresh sand-heap

Mr. Greeley, said Amos, here's Senator Wilson. You refused to see him just now.

There was a moment of silence. Horace scratched away without looking up.

Well, he piped in a shrill alto, without removing his pen, the boy said that a d—d old bum named Wilson wanted to see me, and I thought it was Billy Wilson.—The Journalist.